

**I. AMENDMENTS**

In the claims:

Please amend claims 31, 48 and 56 as follows:

31. (Amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a human Fab molecule, comprising:

a first nucleotide sequence encoding a first polypeptide that is homologous to the binding portion of a  $\gamma 1$  heavy chain variable region ( $V_H$ ) of said human Fab molecule where said heavy chain region exhibits immunological binding affinity for a hepatitis C virus (HCV) E2 antigen; and

a second nucleotide sequence encoding a second polypeptide that is homologous to the binding portion of a  $\kappa$  light chain variable region ( $V_L$ ) of said human Fab molecule where said light chain variable region exhibits immunological binding affinity for a hepatitis C virus (HCV) E2 antigen, wherein said Fab molecules have binding affinity greater than  $1 \times 10^7 M^{-1}$  for HCV E2.

48. (Amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule, comprising a first nucleotide sequence encoding a binding portion of a  $\gamma 1$  heavy chain variable region ( $V_H$ ) of a human Fab molecule obtained from a combinatorial library, wherein said Fab molecule exhibits immunological binding affinity greater than  $1 \times 10^7 M^{-1}$  for a hepatitis C virus (HCV) E2 antigen.

56. (Amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule, comprising a first nucleotide sequence encoding a binding portion of a  $\kappa$  light chain variable region ( $V_L$ ) of a human Fab molecule obtained from a combinatorial library, wherein said Fab molecule exhibits immunological binding affinity greater than  $1 \times 10^7 M^{-1}$  for a hepatitis C virus (HCV) E2 antigen.